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R 300025Z SEP 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5827
INFO RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 779
RUSBD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9381
RUENHO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1951
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7467
RUQMR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 924
RUEHIA/USICA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7232

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E.O. 12865: GDS 9-30-85 (MORLEY, GARY) CR-CA
TAGS: PEPR AF US SHUM PIMR
SUBJ: (C) MFA INFORMATION CHIEF INQUIRES ABOUT CHANCE OF BETTER
RELATIONS WITH USG

REF: KABUL 7286

1. (C-ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: ASADULLAH MATIN, DIRECTOR OF THE MFA INFORMATION DIVISION, TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF A COURTESY CALL ON HIM BY PAO AND MARILYN MCAFFEE, ICA DESK OFFICER, SEPTEMBER 27 TO DECLARE THAT "THEY TOLD ME TO ASK" IF THE U.S. IS WILLING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN. MATIN DID NOT NAME "THEY," BUT HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT HAFIZULLAH AMIN. DURING THE CONVERSATION, THE INFORMATION DIRECTOR MENTIONED AMIN AS BEING "PERSONALLY EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S." MATIN ADDED: "NOW IS A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY". END OF SUMMARY.

3. AFTER PLEASANTRIES, MATIN WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE POINT THAT HE MADE THROUGHOUT THE SESSION. "I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND THE U.S.", HE SAID. "THEY TOLD ME TO ASK. WITH MR. AMIN'S REPLACEMENT OF TARAKI, WE ARE VERY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WHAT CAN BE DONE FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE TO SIGNAL THAT IT ALSO IS INTERESTED?"

4. MCAFEE CITED THE "OBSTACLE" OF THE REGIME'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. MATIN ECHOED HIS GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT POLICY. HE BLAMED TARAKI FOR THE EXCESSES OF THE REVOLUTION. "WHEN TARAKI WAS PRESIDENT," HE SAID, "HE MADE ALL THE DECISIONS, AND MR. AMIN WAS NOT VERY ACTIVE IN DECISION-MAKING. BUT, NOW THAT MR. AMIN HAS REPLACED TARAKI," THE EXCESSES ARE BEING CORRECTED. HE MENTIONED THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS... SO FAR, HE SAID, 400 HAVE BEEN FREED -- INCLUDING MATIN'S OWN BROTHER-IN-LAW, WHO HE SAID WAS RELEASED FROM PUL-I-CHARKI. HE MENTIONED HAFIZULLAH AMIN'S "QUICK ACTION" TO FREE PRISONERS "NOT FOUND GUILTY," AND CITED AS A SYMBOL OF THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS, THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S NEPHEW, ASADULLAH AMIN, SECOND DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS (AND CHIEF OF KAM, THE POLITICAL POLICE) TO HEAD THE COMMITTEE EXAMINING PRISONER RECORDS. HE DESCRIBED THE AMNESTY ORDER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE COUNTRY BECAUSE THEY WERE "MISLED." HE REMARKED ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A CONSTITUTION.

5. FINALLY, MATIN IMPLIED THAT QUESTIONS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN MIGHT "BE CONSIDERED INTERFERENCE."

6. AT THE CLOSE OF THE CONVERSATION, HE RETURNED TO HIS MAIN THEME. "WE NOW WANT CLOSER AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S." AND "SEEK AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BY THE U.S. IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS".

7. COMMENT: MATIN'S EXPLICIT AND CANDID REMARKS ENSURE THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE THEM. THE COMMENTS FIT THE TENOR OF THOSE MADE EARLIER BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE KHAYAL MOHAMMAD KATAWAZI, AS REPORTED IN REFTEL. AFTER INITIALLY REFUSI

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ING ICA DESK OFFICER, THE DRA APPARENTLY DECIDED TO OFFER A CORDIAL WELCOME INTERLACED WITH SIGNALS THAT IT WANTS IMPROVEMENT OF AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS UNDER THE AMIN REGIME. AMSTUTZ

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